AN

EPISTLE

FROM A

NOBLEMAN

TO A

Doctor of *Divinity*:

In Answer to a *Latin* Letter in Verse.

Written from *H----n-C---t*, *Aug.* 28. 1733.

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NOBLEMAN

TO A

Doctor of Divinity, *&c.*

SUPPLIANT your Pardon firſt I muſt implore,
(Dear Doctor!) that I've never wrote before:
But in the conſtant Buſtle of a Court,
Betwixt our Forms, our Bus'neſs, and our Sport;
Tho' you may think whole Days are unenjoy'd,
Yet ſcarce one Moment paſſes unemploy'd.

In

In the next place, when I declare how long
I've taken leave of *Greek* or *Latin* Song;
That all I learn'd from *Doctor Freind* at School,
By *Gradus*, *Lexicon*, or Grammar-Rule;
Of Saphic, Lyric, or Iambic Odes,
Or *Doctor King*'s Machinary of Gods,
Has quite deſerted this poor *John-Trot* Head,
And left plain native *Engliſh* in its ſtead:
I'm ſure your courteous Rev'rence will forgive
The homely Way, in which you now receive
Theſe hearty Thanks, from an illiterate Hand,
For Favours which I barely underſtand.

You know the Proverb ſays, That of a Cat,
The Creature's Skin is all that you can get;
So from no Head you ever can receive
More Wit, than ſuch a Head has got to give:
Let for this Reaſon then, my learned Friend,
Gracious, accept the All I have to ſend;
Nor wonder that my Brain no more affords,
But recollect the Privilege of L---ds;
And when you ſee me fairly write my Name,
For *England*'s *Sake* wiſh all could do the ſame.
Nay, I perhaps could not ſo much have done,
Had I been bred and born an eldeſt Son.
A Noble Father's Heir, ſpoil'd by his Mother,
Leaves Learning always to his younger Brother;
Who at the Bar muſt prate to earn a Groat,
Whilſt all *our* Bus'neſs is to dreſs and vote.

The very Moment therefore I grew Great,
A lazy, titled Heir to an Eſtate;
For fear my Education might bely,
By ſome mean Badge of Senſe, my Quality;
That to good Blood, by old preſcriptive Rules,
Gives Right hereditary to be Fools;
I ſtreight began upon a quite new Score,
Neglected all that I had learn'd before,
And not to ſeem a Novice in my State,
Or ignorant what belong'd to being great,

With

With little Judgment, and good Store of Pride,
I took upon me always to decide:
In every Company was bold and loud;
Behav'd myſelf as rudely as I could,
And ne'er diſcours'd of what I underſtood.
'Tis thus among *the Great:* If any one
By chance has *Wit*, ſo aukwardly 'tis ſhown,
That 'tis a leſs Misfortune to have none.
For ſtill he goes on this erroneous Rule,
That no body with *Wit* can be a *Fool*;
Yet by Example, at his own Expence,
Proves one may have it without *common Senſe*.
For, void of Prudence, and too vain of Parts,
How oft good Heads have plainer ſhewn bad Hearts?
When in Obſcurity perhaps the *Laſt*,
Without the *Firſt*, had fortunately paſt.
Thus whilſt to Wit their ſole Ambition tends,
(Whilſt for one Joke they give up fifty Friends)
Tho' ne'er adapted to a manly Uſe,
But ſtill on Trifles ſquander'd, or Abuſe;
They think the World ſo blind, and to admit,
All Underſtanding is compris'd in *Wit*.
That dang'rous Flow of a licentious Brain,
Which wanting Skill it's Ardour to reſtrain,
Converts to Ill, like Nouriſhment to Pain.
Perhaps you'll ſay, to its Excuſe inclin'd,
If 'tis an Ill, 'tis of a pleaſing kind.
I grant it ſuch, but ſtill 'tis a Diſeaſe.
Are Calentures not Ills becauſe they pleaſe?
Or who will call the Gout, or Stone a Good,
Becauſe engender'd by the richeſt Blood?
Luxuriant Branches ſhow a fertile Root,
But unreſtrain'd, they bear but little Fruit:
So Wit unprun'd, and wanting Judgment's Aid,
Is the crude Fruit of a good uſeleſs Head.
Such Wits are nought but glittering Ignorance:
What *Monkeys* are to Men, they are to Senſe;
Imperfect Mimicks, ludicrous and mean;
Who often bite that Fool they entertain.
Their Tricks may pleaſe, their Quickneſs may ſurpriſe;
At firſt we wonder, but at laſt deſpiſe.

The Wiſe avoid ſuch Animals with Care,
And he who laughs the loudeſt, laughs in Fear.
True Wit is Reaſon in her gayeſt Strain;
That can at once inform and entertain:
Her lively Truths attentive we explore,
Pleas'd we commend, inſtructed we adore.

But of this rare, this eſtimable Kind,
In the great World, few Inſtances we find:
Tho' aiming at it, diſſolute and loud,
And of the Faults, they ought to bluſh for, proud.
How oft we hear ſome Witling pert and dull,
By Faſhion *Coxcomb*, and by Nature *Fool*:
With hackney Maxims, in dogmatic Strain,
Scoffing *Religion* or the *Marriage-Chain*.
Then from his Common-place Book he repeats,
" That Lawyers all are Rogues, and Parſons Cheats;
" Phyſicians ignorant, and Courtiers Slaves;
" Great Kings but Actors, and great Stateſmen Knaves;
" That Vice and Virtue's nothing but a Jeſt,
" And all Morality Deceit well dreſt;
" That Life itſelf is like a wrangling Game,
" Where ſome for Int'reſt play, and ſome for Fame;
" Whilſt ev'ry Gameſter at this Board we meet,
" Muſt either be the Bubble or the Cheat.
And when this Catalogue he has run o'er,
And empty'd of whipt Cream his frothy Store,
Thinks he's ſo wiſe no *Solomon* knows more:
That the weak Texture of his flimſy Brain,
Is fit the Weight on *Walpole's* to ſuſtain;
In *Senates* to preſide, to mold *the State*,
And fix in *England*'s Service, *Europe*'s Fate.

Since ſuch you'll find moſt Men of our Degree,
Excuſe the Ignorance appears in me.
Nor marvel whilſt that Ign'rance I rehearſe,
That ſtill I know enough to do't in Verſe:
Guiltleſs of Thought, each Blockhead may compoſe
This nothing-meaning Verſe, as faſt as Proſe.
And *P---e* with Juſtice of ſuch Lines may ſay,
His Lordſhip ſpins a thouſand in a Day.

Such *P---e* himſelf might write, who ne'er could think:
He who at *Crambo* plays with Pen and Ink;
And is call'd Poet, 'cauſe in Rhyme he wrote
What *Dacier* conſtrued, and what *Homer* thought:
But in Reality this Jingler's Claim,
Or to an Author's, or a Poet's Name,
A Judge of writing would no more admit,
Than each dull *Dictionary*'s Claim to Wit;
That nothing gives you at its own Expence,
But a few modern Words for ancient Senſe.
'Tis thus, whene'er *P---pe* writes, he's forc'd to go
And *beg a little Senſe*, as School-boys do.
" For all cannot invent, who can tranſlate;
No more than thoſe who cloath us can create.
When we ſee *Celia* ſhining in Brocade,
Who thinks 'tis *Hinchlif* all that Beauty made?
And *P---pe*, in his beſt Works, we only find
The gaudy *Hinchlif* of ſome beauteous Mind.
To bid his Genius work without that Aid,
Would be as much miſtaking of his Trade,
As 'twould to bid your *Hatter* make a *Head*.
Since this Mechanic's, like the other's Pains,
Are all for dreſſing other Peoples Brains.

But had he not, to his eternal Shame,
By trying to deſerve a Sat'riſt's Name,
Prov'd he can ne'er invent but to defame:
Had not his *Taſte* and *Riches* lately ſhown,
When he would talk of Genius to the Town,
How ill he chuſes, if he truſts his own.
Had he, in modern Language, only wrote
Thoſe Rules which *Horace*, and which *Vida* taught;
On *Garth* or *Boileau*'s Model built his Fame,
Or ſold *Broome*'s Labours printed with *P---pe*'s Name:
Had he ne'er aim'd at any Work beſide,
In Glory then he might have liv'd and dy'd;
And ever been, tho' not with Genius fir'd,
By *School-boys* quoted, and by *Girls* admir'd.

So much for *P---pe*----And were I not afraid,
Tho' I wrote more, that you no more would read,
I now would try to jumble into Rhyme,
Th' Account you ask of how we paſs our Time:
But by the manner of your ſpending yours,
Gueſs---and you'll not be very wide of ours.
For *C---ts* are only larger Families,
The Growth of each, few Truths, and many Lies:
Like you we *lounge*, and feaſt, and play, and chatter;
In private ſatirize, in publick flatter.
Few to each other, all to one Point true;
Which one I ſha'n't, nor need explain. Adieu.

F I N I S.